Minutes from first Stakeholder Meeting under the EC project

‘Sustainable Management of Cormorant Populations’

held at Kaløvig Conference Centre, Denmark

4 - 6th April 2011

21 September 2011

Service Contract N° 07-0307/ 2010/575579/SER/B3
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Summary

Further to the tender ENV.B.3/SER/2010/0016 concerning cormorants, the Directorate-General for Environment, on behalf of the European Commission, hired a contractor from 1 February 2011 to:

(a) Establish a web-based platform under DG Environment where interested parties and users can find relevant information about cormorant numbers, cormorant ecology, cormorant-fish-fisheries conflicts and management of conflicts.

(b) Organise European-wide counts of breeding colonies and wintering cormorants.

The consortium responsible for the contract formed a group of main stakeholders' organisations of which most have an interest in cormorants and their impacts on fisheries, fish stocks, recreational angling and aquaculture. The main aim of the Stakeholders Liaison Group (SLG) is to ease communication and support information exchange with and among stakeholders.

The first SLG meeting took place in Denmark during 4-6th April 2011. Present at the meeting were:

• Representatives of six stakeholder organisations that dealt with relevant topics such as wild fish stocks, angling, commercial fisheries, aquaculture, birds and hunting. A seventh organisation, FFA – Federation France d’ Aquaculture, did not participate but sent a position paper (Appendix B2).
• A representative from the Directorate-General for Environment under the European Commission
• An invited specialist in cormorant ecology from Wetlands International IUCN/SSC Cormorant Research Group
• A professional facilitator with an environmental science/ecology background
• Project team members.

To assist with planning and help ensure that everyone’s voice would be heard in a positive and helpful way, a questionnaire was designed and sent to everyone prior to the meeting; all participants returned their questionnaires. An anonymised summary of questionnaire answers was presented at the meeting and is enclosed with these minutes. Some participants included parts of their questionnaire answers in their ‘Summary of Stakeholder Presentations’ (Appendix B1).

As this was the inaugural meeting of the SLG, the focus was on: listening to others’ views on the issues; building relationships; discussing some actions, and approaches to future project participation and communication; and agreeing ground rules for communication within the SLG.

At the meeting the stakeholders had the opportunity to make brief presentations on their overall views about the issue and the project in general, and to voice more specifically their opinion regarding the individual agenda points. Further opportunities were created formally within the meeting, and participants were able to discuss issues informally outside the agenda.

The project team gave information about the project (its aims, opportunities and limitations) and the services to be developed on the websites. It also informed participants that the counts of cormorants are planned for spring-summer 2012 and January 2013. These project-related activities were discussed, and all stakeholders contributed with suggestions for how the project should proceed.

The stakeholders concluded that they appreciated that the SLG had been formed. Some concerns remain and the discussion remains open. Some stakeholders stated that they expect clear steps towards “… a sustainable management of cormorant population according to the official title of the
The general feeling was that the meeting overall had provided a positive first step in the delivery of the project objectives and in informing and involving stakeholders.

**Acronyms and Initials**

**Participants and Initials**

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>Bruno Broughton</td>
<td>project sub-contractor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bruno.broughton@virgin.net">bruno.broughton@virgin.net</a></td>
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<td>CG</td>
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<tr>
<td>FK</td>
<td>Franz Kohl</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>Ian Russell</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>JS</td>
<td>Jorge Savio</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSR</td>
<td>Julie Storm Rasmussen</td>
<td>minutes and meeting assistant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jsr@dmu.dk">jsr@dmu.dk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>JYP</td>
<td>Jean-Yves Paquet</td>
<td>BirdLife Europe</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jean-yves.paquet@aves.be">jean-yves.paquet@aves.be</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>MvE</td>
<td>Mennobart van Eerden</td>
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<td>Peter Breckling</td>
<td>Europeche, COPA COGECA, DeutscherFischereiVerbande.V</td>
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<td>Petri Heinimaa</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:petri.heinimaa@rktl.fi">petri.heinimaa@rktl.fi</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>Scott Jones</td>
<td>facilitator &amp; sub-contractor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:scott@mind-the-gap.net">scott@mind-the-gap.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>TB</td>
<td>Thomas Bregnballe</td>
<td>project co-leader</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tb@dmu.dk">tb@dmu.dk</a></td>
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**Organisations and Acronyms**

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<td>Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UK)</td>
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<td>Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations - General Committee for Agricultural Cooperation in the European Union</td>
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<td>Wetlands International IUCN/SSC Cormorant Research Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>DG Env</td>
<td>Directorate-General, Environment (under European Commission)</td>
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<td>FEAP</td>
<td>Federation of European Aquaculture Producers</td>
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<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
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<td>National Environmental Research Institute, Aarhus University (DK)</td>
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<td>SLG</td>
<td>Stakeholder Liaison Group</td>
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<td>SSC</td>
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Background to the Project

Echoing concerns from the various affected social and economic sectors, the European Parliament requested that the European Commission take action to minimise the impact of cormorants on fish fauna, commercial and recreational fishing and aquaculture in Europe.

Accordingly, the Commission has engaged in two lines of action:

1. It is developing a non-binding guidance document exploring both the possibilities provided by Article 9 of the EU Birds Directive to deal with the issue and collecting relevant experience regarding its application;

2. It has hired a contractor to (a) disseminate relevant information about cormorants through a website, and (b) organise counts of cormorants in Europe within a three-year period.

The contractor, consisting of Aarhus University in Denmark and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in the United Kingdom, initiated the project on 1 February 2011. To achieve project success these two institutions formed a consortium and hired six sub-contractors. The consortium also established a partnership with Wetlands International IUCN/SSC Cormorant Research Group.

The main goals and project activities are to:

1. Establish an EU Cormorant Platform under DG Environment. This website will provide an authoritative source of information about cormorants, cormorant numbers and conflicts related to cormorants, fish and fisheries. The platform will allow dissemination of experiences with cormorant management, as well as the existing and potential best practice on solutions to reduce the impact of cormorants on fisheries, fish fauna and aquaculture. Overall, it should provide an open platform for thorough, solution-oriented, discussion of controversial questions. Also, the role of the Platform will be to work as a brokerage for putting together and facilitating arrangements between interested parties.

2. Organise a count of all cormorant colonies in the EU Member States and adjacent countries in the breeding season of 2012 and a pan-European census of wintering birds in January 2013. These counts will be organised in collaboration with Wetlands International IUCN/SSC Cormorant Research Group. It is hoped to extend the range of the counts to as many European countries as possible. The coverage of colonies and winter roosts will vary among countries participating in the counts, partly because full coverage is almost impossible to reach in some countries and partly because the vast majority of sites will have to be covered by volunteers willing to undertake the counts. Further information on this will be provided at the next meeting.

3. Connect selected stakeholder groups to the project through a Stakeholders Liaison Group (SLG). After the consortium’s bid was accepted the legal and structural arrangements about how the Platform would work were clarified. The SLG (rather than the Platform) will provide a vehicle for discussion because the Platform cannot be designed to facilitate an online discussion forum, serve as a broker, or facilitate arrangements between parties. Thus, some of the functions that the Commission intended for the Platform will now partly be accommodated through the SLG. This includes the idea that the Platform should facilitate “…thorough, solution-oriented, discussions of controversial questions, and that it should work as a brokerage for putting together and facilitating arrangements between interested parties.” It is the intention to publish some of the results of discussions in the SLG through the Platform, partly through answers given to FAQ.
The Stakeholders Liaison Group (SLG)

Background and Aims

The consortium responsible for the contract with the DG Environment decided to form the SLG, the aim of which is to ease communication and support information exchange with and among the main stakeholder organisations in Europe.

Having formed the SLG the project aims to create a positive atmosphere where views can be exchanged and possible solutions can be discussed. It is the intention that all parties support the project’s attempt to improve dissemination of relevant information about cormorants; conflicts related to cormorants, fish and fisheries; and existing / potential solutions for conflicts.

The First SLG Meeting

The first SLG meeting was convened on 4-6th April 2011 at the Kaløvig Conference Centre, north of Aarhus, Denmark. It focused on information sharing and collaborative discussions to help all members of the SLG (including the relevant project team members) to:

1. Understand project objectives and structure,
2. Clarify each others’ needs from the project,
3. Strengthen understanding of others’ needs,
4. Start to build ways in which members can collaborate effectively, and
5. Begin to decide specific points regarding format and content of the Platform

Before the meeting each participant had received:

• A detailed agenda for the meeting
• A pre-meeting questionnaire (10 questions)

The questionnaire’s purpose was to assist planning and help the facilitator (SJ) ensure that participants’ views could be aired in a positive and helpful way. All the stakeholder representatives returned their questionnaire answers before the start of the meeting. SJ clustered responses under headings reflecting the issues that emerged, and he made an anonymised summary of the responses given for each question (see Appendix C).

All SLG participants were invited to comment and make suggestions on two drafts of these minutes. Several stakeholders suggested important changes, most of which have been incorporated into these minutes, which represent the official record of the meeting.

Activities

The meeting largely followed the agenda (see Appendix A). However, pressure of time did not allow discussion on ‘Illustrated scenarios from the Platform’ that was initially planned for the last day. There was a mixture of plenary discussion and presentations, as well as small group sessions where participants split into two groups. The meeting was interactive and participatory, with plenty of scope for people to discuss their views in ways that they wished. There was also ample time available for informal discussions in breaks and during the evenings.

Priority was given to developing a sense of progression and pace. Several participants noted their preference for discussion time among the group, with only as much presentation as necessary about
project design and management. The last morning sessions on the second day (‘Project Management’ and ‘The Role of the SLG’) were therefore abandoned, allowing a more general discussion led by participants.

Stakeholders were asked to prepare a 6-8 minute presentation describing their organisations and, as far as time allowed, some of their views on the project and the issues. The FAA was not present at the meeting but had sent a detailed position paper with a vivid description of their concerns, an English translation of which was read out in the meeting. Summaries of these presentations and the FFA letter are given in Appendix B1 and B2.

The meeting opened at 14.30hrs on 4 April 2011. After a welcome and introduction, participants briefly introduced themselves and their organisations. Confidentiality issues were explored, and a discussion took place on project background and what the Commission requested from the project. An introduction was also given to the project structure and the people involved.

This was followed by a short discussion on participants’ initial feelings and thoughts concerning expectations from the project, its scope and the fact that this was a first step toward a longer-term goal.

It was noted that at present the project is only funded for one year.

TB outlined the four main project ‘tasks:

• The official EU ‘Cormorant Platform’ (referred to as the ‘Platform’ from here onward) for dissemination of information
• Information exchange and engagement with stakeholders through the SLG
• A pan-European count of cormorant breeding colonies in spring-summer 2012
• A pan-European count of cormorants wintering in Europe, to take place in January 2013.

He noted the importance of transparency and the focus on disseminating information. He said that the project would welcome views from stakeholders on what they would like to see on the Platform, stressing that the process and the project deliverables would benefit from stakeholders’ ideas. He also stressed that due to the project budget there will be limits to the amount of resource that can be invested in trying to accommodate various suggestions.

Opportunity was provided for participants to voice concerns about the project, their own needs, the needs and expectations of the organisations they represented, and any reporting that they needed to make to their organisations. TB and JS helped to clarify several issues that were raised by stakeholders. Where there was insufficient time to explore an issue immediately, it was ‘parked’ on a flip chart, to which people could add issues as they wished throughout the meeting.

SJ noted two strong themes from the questionnaire – (a) the need for progression, and (b) people’s wish for clarity and openness. He also noted that this project offered a big opportunity given such good stakeholder engagement, so much common ground to explore and such strong commitment from the Commission.

Clarification was sought around the project title - ‘Sustainable management of cormorant populations’ - especially where some stakeholders saw sustainable management in the specific context of some form of co-ordinated pan-European regulation of the cormorant population. However, TB stressed that this was not an objective of the project. The main aims of the current project were to:

- Develop a reliable and authoritative source of information on cormorants, cormorant / fish / fishery conflicts and cormorant management options, and
- Organise new pan-European counts of cormorant numbers in an attempt “to provide an updated, methodologically sound, reliable, and generally accepted information basis about the state and dynamics of the Cormorant populations”.
The project will provide information about how cormorants have been managed in different countries in Europe. By better informing people about the conflicts and the available options for managing these, JS confirmed that the Commission do see the project as an initiative that can support the Commission's idea of sustainable management in a broad sense.

Others noted that they did not want to see this project as a continuation of earlier studies and that the scenarios concerning population management in the contractors' project proposal were not realistic in their view. One person commented that they "...neglect what fishery stakeholders have consistently stated for more than ten years." However, participants agreed that they would like this project to succeed, stressing that open, frank dialogue was a key issue.

Some disagreement arose from different views on population management. One stakeholder was concerned that the introduction of population management of cormorants might be regarded as a test case thus setting a precedent that could be used for other bird species.

Fishery stakeholders stressed that under the Birds Directive population management of birds is a legitimate measure to prevent serious damage and is already in use for certain species, including cormorant management in Denmark, France, Austria and several German Länder. Fisheries stakeholders noted that many people are already involved in population management activities to address cormorant impacts (e.g. shooting of many cormorants in France, oiling of eggs in Denmark, various local activities based on Article 9 derogations) and felt that such measures should be coordinated at a European level. They also felt there was no danger of setting precedents, since there was no 'one size fits all' solution for other bird species because of their different biology and population dynamics. They were of the opinion that all of the uncoordinated measures carried out under Article 9 over the last two decades had not solved the problem in general.

It was also clear during the meeting that there are different views on how the amount of damages is likely to be related to overall population size of cormorants in Europe or to numbers of cormorants present in a region. Some claimed that it is unlikely that the extent of damages will be reduced in proportion to a reduction in numbers of cormorants present in a region. Others claimed that although damages might stay about the same in special cases, where pound nets or fish ponds are very near to the bird's colony, it might very well be different for more distant water bodies. One stakeholder stated that there is ample evidence that cormorants for reasons of energy efficiency prefer hunting near their colony and therefore cormorants are likely to invade the especially sensitive (and more distant) trout and grayling rivers, only when their numbers surpass the carrying capacity of the initially preferred large waters. JS remarked that the question whether damages change proportionally or unproportionally with cormorant numbers is of key importance and should be investigated further.

Ground rules and confidentiality were also discussed although it was noted that developing an effective SLG is more about building respect and establishing accepted procedures. SJ also discussed the importance of 'framing' the problem where a need exists (in his view) to find a common way of describing 'the conflict' with which all key stakeholders could agree. He drew a diagram that illustrated how different styles may be used to approach discussions, depending on how people see the balance between the importance of goals and the importance of relationships (Appendix F).

SJ summarised the complexity of cormorant, fish and fishery conflicts – many fisheries & many impacts (quantity and quality) - as well as lots of other factors affect fisheries (see Appendix E). Policy-makers, he said, prefer to work from strong, verifiable, causal links, rather than rumour or opinion. However, many of the data needed to establish clear scientific links are extremely hard to obtain. For example, fish population changes are difficult to measure and quantify unequivocally, and counting cormorants across their entire range on the same weekend is a huge challenge. It is therefore necessary also to consider the best obtainable data and work from less verifiable but plausible links (Appendix E). Others put forward views on definitions for 'validity' and the need to apply those.
A short discussion then took place on the importance of guarding against an ‘unreasonable burden of proof’. The fact that impacts on fisheries may be hard to quantify and demonstrate does not mean that impacts do not exist. Some participants, for example, felt that for aquaculture and small-medium rivers there are enough solid empirical studies that demonstrate direct causal impacts of the birds on fish stocks.

Other concerns covered several matters, including issues for the EC and the ability of the Project to leverage change. This led to wider discussions about individual stakeholder’s concerns and perspectives, the opportunities that stakeholders saw from the project and the scope of the project’s mandate.

SJ briefly summarised other human-wildlife conflicts and their relevance to cormorant, fish and fisheries conflicts. He noted the opportunity within the project to draw on these diverse experiences and that this may help to shed light on the cormorant conflict. For example, taking such an analytical ‘step back’ could clarify:-

a) Where other conflicts (e.g. relating to otters, seals, wolves, beavers, roe deer) could provide insights or guidance for us, or

b) Areas where ‘our’ conflict was distinctive from other conflicts.

On the second day the project team demonstrated where on the internet the EU Cormorant Platform will be located and what rules it must follow in terms of design. Examples were given to illustrate how graphs and links to relevant material and issues will be added to the Platform.

There was a discussion about how much detailed information should be put on the Platform and to what extent it should give links to other Internet sites. Stakeholders warned that it might be confusing to have too many side issues and too many links. It was concluded that the Platform should be kept compact and that only a limited number of carefully qualified links should be given.

It was explained that when the Platform goes live (planned for the end of May 2011) it would focus on a few priority issues. Extra material will be added progressively during the lifetime of the project.

Ian Russell led a discussion on the INTERCAFE Toolbox, one of the outputs from the INTERCAFE project. This included an outline of the way the Toolbox is structured, reflection on how the Toolbox has been developed, and a review of the methods for cormorant management or control the Toolbox contains. The Toolbox has been finalised and is ready to meet the present publication date of autumn 2011, subject to some minor updating of the case studies it contains.

One stakeholder observed that all the ‘tools’ from the toolbox are by now basically common knowledge to everyone that is involved in any way with the cormorant problem. The tools are being used all the time, yet the problems persist. IR and BB agreed that the tools are mostly common knowledge, stating that the toolbox was a way of bringing these together in one place and that many stakeholders had supported the need for collating known methods or management approaches in a ‘toolbox.’

After group discussions on the Toolbox, MvE gave a presentation of results from a pan-European count of cormorants at winter roosts in 2003 and a count of breeding colonies in 2006. The presentation included some analyses of how cormorants were distributed in relation to environmental variables such as winter temperature and type of water bodies. These counts were organised by the Cormorant Research Group. This was followed by questions and general discussion. Fishery stakeholders stressed that it is of great importance that comprehensive descriptions are given of methodology and coverage of counting.
The workshop then broke into small groups to discuss the terms of reference, the role of the SLG in the project, and actions going forward. These groups reported back and during discussions a number of actions were agreed (Table 1).

Photograph 1

Participants at the 1st meeting of the projects’ Stakeholders Liaison Group, Kaløvig Conference Centre, April 2011.
- Seated from left to right: Julie S. Rasmussen, Cy Griffin, Mennobart van Eerden, Ian Russell, Franz Kohl.
- Standing from left to right: Scott Jones, Jean-Yves Paquet, Jorge Savio, Peter Breckling, Thomas Bregnalle, Petri Heinimaa, Bruno Broughton and Ferenc Lévali.

Photograph 2

Scott Jones facilitating plans for coming actions during the 1st meeting of the Stakeholders Liaison Group at Kaløvig Conference Centre, April 2011.
Key Outcomes

The first meeting of the SLG led to a number of outcomes. These included:-

Concerns, Aims, Scope & Limitations

- For the project team and other stakeholders, each stakeholder clarified their main areas of concern in relation to cormorant, fish and fishery conflicts as well as the new project. The respective points were noted and discussed. Not all points could be discussed as fully as some wished.
- Stakeholders obtained a clearer understanding of the project’s aims, scopes and limitations.

Collaboration & Communication

- Draft agreements have been drawn up describing how stakeholders, both individually and as a group, will engage with the project and contribute to project deliverables.
- A communication strategy has been agreed within the SLG, and between the SLG and other project members, including ground rules for communication. As experience proceeds and further needs emerge, this will be clarified and updated by the group.

Future Progress

- Stakeholders made valuable suggestions about the EU Cormorant Platform and its structure, choice of material and services and the need for explanatory text that can assist users in getting an overview and in guiding them in their use of the Platform.
- Stakeholders agreed to assist the project team in (a) formulating answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the Platform, (b) finding material of relevance to users of the Platform, and (c) collating experiences from use of various management actions and tools.
- Stakeholders contributed ideas on transparency, trust and co-operation in relation to the planned counts of cormorants.
- From feedback on the first drafts of these minutes, some participants felt that the level of detail was about right while others felt that more specific detail was required. We will review the way minutes are taken, and part of the next meeting will consider how the minutes can be of most use to SLG members, their constituencies and other project members.
Actions

A number of Actions were agreed. Some of these would be undertaken as part of participants’ normal work and interests (these were not recorded). Formally agreed actions are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Actions agreed by First Stakeholder Liaison Group Meeting, Kaløvig, 4-6 April 2011.

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<th>LEAD BY</th>
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<td>EU CORMORANT PLATFORM</td>
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<td>Background / context</td>
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<td>Cormorant, fish &amp; fisheries interactions</td>
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<td>Draft stakeholder analysis</td>
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<td>Draft project logical framework</td>
<td>SJ</td>
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<td>Draft ground rules</td>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>8 April, pm</td>
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<td>Relevant case studies</td>
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<td>Relevant literature</td>
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<td>Networking &amp; advice on stock assessment &amp; accepted practice</td>
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<td>Send study ‘Mecklenburg-Vorpommerania’ on cormorant population dynamics</td>
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<td>FK offered to do a quick translation if required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links with FEAP + Hungary to provide data of interest</td>
<td>FL</td>
<td>As requested</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical studies – effects of cormorants on fish stocks (e.g. top 11 studies)</td>
<td>FK</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Future SLG Meetings

The second meeting of the SLG is scheduled to take place in the second half of October 2011.

Subject to satisfactory project review in January 2012, one annual meeting will be held in each of the two subsequent years. Discussions will take place both during meetings and on the part of the project workspace (i.e. the projects internal home page) reserved for the SLG.

Besides the members of the group, selected specialists may be invited to inform the SLG about certain matters relevant to the topics planned to be discussed at meetings and in the website discussion forum.

The Cormorant Project Workspace

The workspace will be developed further during 2011, partly with the aim of using it as a discussions, communications and information-sharing tool for use by members of the SLG.

The EU Cormorant Platform

The EU Cormorant Platform will be developed during the project’s lifetime. The present plan is to make the Platform officially available to the general public before the end of May 2011. From May to September 2011 the Platform will mainly focus on describing:

- The issues (the conflicts)
- The background of the project
- The aim of the project
- The projects’ planned activities

Other types of material will be added regularly until the end of the first year of the project. The plan is to incorporate further material on the Platform in September 2011, November 2011 and January 2012. According to the present plan this will include information about the development of cormorant numbers in Europe, links to material about cormorants and cormorant-fish / fisheries conflicts, and a literature database.
APPENDIX A

Sustainable Management of Cormorant Populations’
First Stakeholder Meeting
Kaløvig Conference Centre, near Aarhus, Denmark
Monday 4th to Wednesday 6th April 2011

AGENDA

General format: Two and a half days of information sharing and collaborative discussions to:

a) Understand the project objectives and structure
b) Clarify stakeholders’ needs from the project
c) Strengthen our understanding of others’ needs, and
d) Start to build ways in which we can collaborate effectively.

Initials: Thomas Bregnballe (TB); Bruno Broughton (BB); Ian Russell (IR); Peter Mikkelsen (PMI); Mennobart van Eerden (MvE); Julie Storm Rasmussen (JSR) Jorge Savio (JS); Scott Jones (SJ)

Day One. Monday 4th April 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>Welcome, logistics, confidentiality issues</td>
<td>TB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:45</td>
<td>Brief round table introductions</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Who we are</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Who we represent</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Our role &amp; responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:10</td>
<td>Introduction to the project and the meeting</td>
<td>TB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:35</td>
<td>Brief overview of human/wildlife conflicts</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:45</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Context for fishery/cormorant conflicts</td>
<td>SJ/BB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15</td>
<td>Presentation (6-8 minutes) from each stakeholder organisation</td>
<td>BB/SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30</td>
<td>Summing up and key conclusions from the day</td>
<td>SJ/IR/BB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looking forward – Day Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>Close and dinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Day Two. Tuesday 5th April 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:45</td>
<td>Welcome, outline of the day, logistics. Project structure, components and timeline</td>
<td>TB/SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:20</td>
<td>The EU Platform</td>
<td>JSR/BB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:40</td>
<td>Project Workspace/Forum</td>
<td>PMI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>INTERCAFE outputs and other links</td>
<td>BB/MvE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:20</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50</td>
<td>INTERCAFE Toolbox</td>
<td>IR/BB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20</td>
<td>The counts of cormorants: organisation, counting methodology and collaboration with the CRG</td>
<td>TB/MvE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50</td>
<td>Project management</td>
<td>SJ/TB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:20</td>
<td>The role of the SLG – introduction</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>LUNCH</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Afternoon – ‘developing the role of the SLG’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>Feedback on pre-meeting questionnaire &amp; group tasks</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:50</td>
<td>Break-out groups - work together to address terms of reference</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:50</td>
<td>Reporting back – feedback from each group</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:20</td>
<td>Plenary discussion – opportunities &amp; constraints</td>
<td>TB/SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30</td>
<td>BREAK FOR DINNER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>Fleshing out the SLG role – ideas, concerns, questions Discussion and planning for Day Three</td>
<td>SJ/IR/BB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Day Three. Wednesday 6th April 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:45</td>
<td>Welcome, outline of the day, logistics.</td>
<td>TB/SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>Link back to project deliverables &amp; progress to date Illustrated scenarios for the platform Your likely involvement</td>
<td>SJ/BB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Developing an action plan</td>
<td>SJ/IR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:20</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50</td>
<td>Complete draft list of activities for November 2011</td>
<td>SJ/IR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20</td>
<td>Reflection on progress against meeting objectives</td>
<td>SJ/TB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:40</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>SJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:50</td>
<td>Closing remarks and official record of meeting</td>
<td>JS/TB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>LUNCH &amp; DEPART</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B1

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC)
Designated representative present at the meeting: Petri Heinimaa

EIFAAC is a regional fisheries commission of UN/FAO serving as the centre of a network, linking policy-makers, managers, scientists and others working on inland fisheries and aquaculture issues. EIFAAC has 34 member countries, including the European Commission. EIFAAC has a focus on inland waters and has purely advisory function towards member countries. EIFAAC is undergoing changes; the management structure has been revised and the future focus will be on short term and specifically targeted projects.

A former EIFAAC working party on 'Prevention and Control of Bird Predation', held in Bonn in 2007, focused on the effects of cormorants and other fish-eating birds on inland fisheries, aquaculture and (endangered) fish stocks on a pan-European scale. One of the key recommendations of the Workshop was that an effective European cormorant management plan should be prepared and implemented, involving all relevant stakeholders. The 26th EIFAAC Session in 2010 concluded that the working party should develop a pan-European cormorant management action.

BirdLife Europe
Designated representative present at the meeting: Jean-Yves Paquet

BirdLife International is a global partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. BirdLife partners are independent, membership-based, national non-governmental organisations, governed by a democratic body, with a clear bird conservation programme. Together, the partnership represents 2.5 million members, 1 million ha of nature reserves in management and 4000 staff members. In Europe, most of the partner organizations are involved in bird monitoring at national level, including coordination of volunteer birdwatchers in the field.

In 2004, BirdLife (European Division) developed a position statement concerning cormorant conflicts, recognizing the reality of this issue but also acknowledging the need for more research in order to assess damage on wild fish populations. Concerning the possible solutions, BirdLife states that large-scale culling of cormorants would be impractical and expensive. Furthermore, reducing the total number of cormorants in Europe would not necessarily alleviate impacts in proportion to the perceived damage.

Acting locally to reduce fish availability to cormorants can often reduce the damage. Where cormorants do cause serious damage and where other methods have been ineffective, application of Article 9 of the Birds Directive allows for a local culling of cormorants causing damage.

Finally, governments should be encouraged to open, or continue, discussions with bird conservation organisations and angling/fishery organisations that are able to bring expertise to help solve this complex problem. In this context, BirdLife is hoping that the Platform will provide guidance for best practice in cormorant conflict resolution.
**European Anglers Alliance (EAA)**
Designated representative present at the meeting: Franz Kohl

EAA was launched in 1994. It has 14 member organisations in 11 countries, an office in Brussels and one staff member. EAA promotes ecologically oriented recreational angling (sustainable use, special care for wild fish and aquatic environment).

Regarding cormorants, EAA has generated numerous initiatives and papers (e.g. ‘How many Cormorants in Europe’, a comprehensive synopsis of numbers and development of cormorant population for all European countries – several copies were distributed at the meeting).

Currently, there are many (too many) cases where cormorants predate on such large parts of the fish stock so that only a little (too little) is left for legitimate human use and that, especially in sensitive natural waters, this over-fishing endangers the conservation status of wild fish stocks.

EAA wants a fair balance between cormorants, fish and fishery interests. Incidence of serious damage on inland waters increases over-proportionally with the numbers of cormorants. A properly co-ordinated management of cormorant populations, supported by adequate site-specific measures, is the most reasonable solution – the best way to achieve the full objectives of the EU Birds Directive.

EAA has long wanted a Cormorant Platform at EU level. We want this project to become a success, and our success criteria would be:-

- That EAA can tell its members that the EU website provides authoritative, trustworthy information
- That all other stakeholders can also say the same to their constituencies

This is possible if content is thoroughly checked for validity and if, in case of non-consent, each stakeholder gets the right to express its ‘dissenting opinion.’ A quick start and flowing progress is vital for acceptance of the project. EAA has a list of issues which it recommends to be put on the website already this year, most importantly:-

- Cormorant population numbers and trends (both breeding and non-breeding)
- Open discussion about arguments for and arguments against a population management
- Formal model for ‘feeding site attractivity’
- Assessment of whether and how (linear or non-linear) effects and damage will change in relation to the number of cormorants
- Common terminology (precise definitions for ‘impact’, ‘serious damage’, ‘overfishing’, ‘validity’ etc.)

Finally, regarding cormorant counts, openness to joint counting with anglers is desirable; full transparency is indispensable.
COPA/COGECA & Deutscher Fischerei-Verband e. V.
Designated representative present at the meeting: Peter Breckling

Where we are now? (from the perspective of commercial fishermen and anglers)

- Cormorant populations are well established and far beyond being endangered
- Increasing numbers of cormorants cause damage in ponds, lakes, rivers and coastal areas, fish production and natural fish fauna
- There is a heterogeneous legal situation and a wide range of activities in member states and regions
- Further guidance from the Commission (Article 9 Derogation paper) has been promised and is awaited.

What is necessary?

- COPA/COGECA would like to see the European cormorant population managed using similar approaches to those established for fish stock management, whereby the cormorant population size is regulated on the basis of agreed reference values and targets
- Discussion on targets and reference values

How to get there?

- This would require a Europe-wide assessment and might be approached in similar ways to a previous study carried out in the Mecklenburg-Vorpommerania area of Germany.
- It is envisaged that a stepwise approach would be required for such a long-term management plan, with yearly reduction rates for population size and associated monitoring to evaluate targets and reference points.
- Such an approach should, ideally, integrate environmental aspects.
- COPA/COGECA believe such an approach would be consistent with the sustainable cormorant management plan advocated by the EP Decision in 2008.

Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)
Designated representative present at the meeting: Ferenc Lévai

The FEAP organization

- An international organization, composed of the national associations of European countries
- Founded in 1968 by the national associations of France, Belgium, Germany and Italy
- Presently 28 associations from 23 countries
- Based in Belgium
- Administered by the Management Committee elected by the General Assembly (President: Mr. Arnault Chaperon)
- Assisted by the General Secretary - Mr. Courtney Hough
- Issues are discussed in specific FEAP commission meetings
- Freshwater Fish Commission - Chairman: Mr. Wim van Eijk

Cormorant problem

- Discussed frequently in the commission meetings and during the GA
- All countries with pond aquaculture are affected
- Most affected countries are: France, Germany, Czech Rep., Poland, Hungary, Croatia, etc.
- Not all countries involved in the problem are members of FEAP
- Direct fish losses to predation could reach 50% or more, depending on the size, the species and the methods of protection
• Indirect losses include loss of yield due to stress, injured fish, loss of biodiversity, etc.
• Main defense methods are shooting and scaring
• Passive protection methods (e.g. Protective netting) do not work on larger ponds
• Costs are high and results are limited
• In our view, this is an international problem, reaching across borders due to migration
• It should be dealt with in an international manner
• Local solutions are costly and ineffective

Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE)
Designated representative present at the meeting: Cy Griffin

FACE is an international NGO founded in 1977 that acts in the interests of over 7,000,000 European hunters. Based in Brussels it represents its 36 Full Members that are national hunters’ associations within the Member States of the European Union and other Council of Europe countries.

FACE’s main objectives are to promote hunting in accordance with the principle of wise and sustainable use of natural resources, and to defend and to represent collective interests of its members.

A large part of FACE’s work is to monitor the interpretation and implementation of the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC, and offer its expertise to its members, EU institutions and international conventions such as the CMS. This entails a certain amount of conflict resolution, often aided by open dialogue aiming at improving understanding of the legal and technical aspects of the Bird Directive’s provisions on hunting. This is best illustrated by FACE’s involvement in the European Commission’s Sustainable Hunting Initiative and the related agreement between BirdLife International and FACE signed in 2004.

In 2008 FACE urged to the European Commission to give clearer guidelines to Member States on how best to regulate cormorant populations and address issues related to economic and ecological pressures caused by cormorants. FACE stressed that any actions should be carried out within the existing framework of the Birds Directive and any modification of the Annexes would result in a lengthy and complex procedure which would be unlikely to yield satisfactory a solution to cormorant conflicts.
APPENDIX B 2

LETTER OF FEDERATION FRANCE D’ AQUACULTURE (FAA)

FAA had been invited to the SLG, but did not want to come due to, as they stated, “lack of time and financial funds”. However, they sent a detailed letter with a vivid description of their problems with cormorants. A raw English translation of the letter was read out in the meeting and made a strong impression on participants because of the severity of negative consequences that were captured in a succinct and clear way. FL, specifically, commented that the fish farms in his organisations also suffered the same problems.

Though FFA was not physically present, their input was at least as substantial to the meeting as the short presentations of the other stakeholders, and therefore their letter is included in these minutes.

POSITION PAPER

Objet : Séminaire cormorans du 4 au 6/04/2011
St Jean d’Illac, le 22 mars 2011

Monsieur,

Par ce courrier, nous avons le regret de vous informer que la Fédération Française d’Aquaculture ne pourra pas être représentée lors du séminaire dédié au cormoran et programmé du 4 au 6 avril prochain au Danemark. Nous sommes actuellement dans l’impossibilité de participer à de tels séminaires (manque de disponibilités des pisciculteurs et surtout de financements).

En effet, la filière piscicole en étangs française traverse une situation catastrophique face au problème majeur de gestion des impacts du cormoran sur nos exploitations. De nombreux propriétaires d’étangs et des pisciculteurs arrêtent la gestion de leurs étangs chaque année. A l’heure actuelle, la pisciculture en étangs française enregistre des pertes économiques considérables et pour la première fois de son histoire est au bord de la ruine et lutte pour survivre:

1) Les prélèvements de poissons dans les élevages ont contribué à faire baisser la production de poissons d’étangs (estimée à un peu moins de 7 000 tonnes en France pour 112 000 ha de plans d’eau, contre 12 000 tonnes en 2 000). Pour limiter ces prélèvements, les aquaculteurs vident leurs étangs de plus en plus tôt (octobre au lieu de novembre – décembre et il n’y a quasiment plus de pêches en début d’année), ce qui entraîne une perte de production non négligeable. A cela, il faut ajouter les blessures sur les poissons, ce qui en rend une partie non commercialisable et facilite l’apparition de diverses pathologies.

2) Dans certaines régions (Dombes, Brenne, Sologne, Forez, Lorraine ou Champagne par exemple en France, mais cela se retrouve dans de nombreux pays européens), les étangs contribuent à l’identité et à l’économie locales. Les propriétaires d’étangs ont tendance à abandonner la gestion de leurs plans d’eau, basée sur la récupération des poissons par vidanges périodiques, provoquant des chutes de la biodiversité (batraciens, oiseaux aquatiques, libellules, etc.). Lorsque l’exploitation des étangs est devenue non rentable, le plan d’eau est remplacé par des cultures, éliminant des zones de repos pour les oiseaux migrateurs et de nourrissage pour les jeunes. Ce sont alors les paysages qui se transforment, avec une chute drastique de la biodiversité. Ces abandons engendrent donc des impacts écologiques considérables (perte de biodiversité, assèchement des zones humides, …) mais également une réelle perte d’identité des territoires. Tout a été tenté au niveau des pisciculteurs français. La France doit aujourd’hui faire face à la fois à des populations d’oiseaux nicheurs qui se reproduisent très rapidement, à des populations d’oiseaux migrants de plus en plus importantes, ainsi qu’à la multiplication des colonies sédentaires.

3) La demande de poissons d’étangs en vue du repeuplement ne pouvant être satisfaite par les éleveurs français, de nombreuses importations (environ 1 000 tonnes en 2006 - 2007 ; quantité en augmentation constante) sont alors effectuées avec les risques que de telles pratiques font courir aux écosystèmes aquatiques :

- des introductions d’espèces invasives (plantes, invertébrés, crustacés, poissons, batraciens),
- des pathologies diverses.
4) Les pisciculteurs ont pourtant expérimenté toutes les méthodes de dissuasion envisageables (files de protection, dispositifs sonores, …). Toutes se sont révélées inefficaces ou de portée limitée, souvent très coûteuses, créant ainsi le déficit des entreprises et accélérant l’abandon d’étangs par leurs exploitants. En effet, la protection passive contre les oiseaux par des grillages, treillis et autres, n’a guère d’efficacité. Les banderole et autres dispositifs ne peuvent être réservés qu’aux plans d’eau de taille réduite. Les divers systèmes d’effarouchement (mêmes ceux à détonations apériodiques) montrent rapidement leurs limites. Les appareils sonores (genre « Cormo-Shop »), imitant des cris d’orque (rare prédateur du cormoran), ont une efficacité qui ne dépasse pas 1,5 à 2 hectares, leur prix est dissuasif et leur maintenance demeure à vérifier. Aucun système n’est réellement efficace, même si certaines techniques peuvent être utilisées dans des cas particuliers, sur des temps relativement brefs (étangs de stockage par exemple), encore que, lorsque la quantité de poissons est élevée, les oiseaux évitent les systèmes d’effarouchement par des temps de pêche très brefs.

5) En France, où la régulation est active, sont accordés des quotas de tirs (30 000 oiseaux environ au total), selon les départements et la présence de plans d’eau, aux pêcheurs et aux aquaculteurs, sous réserve d’un encadrement des tirs (autorisations individuelles, suivis des tirs). Les scientifiques s’accordent sur le fait qu’en absence de régulation par les tirs, la population de cormorans augmenterait de 15 % par an. Les tirs s’effectuent contre des animaux dont l’espérance de vie est importante (20 ans minimum), dans la pratique, ils sont délicats (les oiseaux repèrent rapidement les tireurs et supportent les projectiles). Ces tirs contribuent à éclater les colonies et à déplacer les cormorans vers d’autres sites. Après destruction, d’autres oiseaux colonisent les espaces libres si bien que les tirs doivent se prolonger durant tout l’hiver, sans réduction de la population (Bavière par exemple) et par corollaire, sans diminution de la prédation, ce qui pose le problème de la limitation de la régulation par des quotas. Le cormoran possède des capacités d’adaptation très fortes. La régulation s’avère particulièrement coûteuse et mobilise de nombreux tireurs durant de longues semaines. On peut aussi considérer que l’ensemble des oiseaux tués en Europe n’a que des conséquences faibles sur les effectifs globaux d’une population qui comporte un grand nombre d’oiseaux nicheurs. Chaque couple produit 3 à 4 poussins par an avec des taux de survie plus ou moins élevés en fonction des conditions et de l’espace disponible, ce qui assure le renouvellement des animaux morts. Toutefois dans la situation actuelle, il semble difficile d’échapper à une régulation de l’espèce sans recourir aux tirs. Il faut aussi admettre que les tirs peuvent avoir (ce n’est pas toujours le cas) un effet d’effarouchement (à condition d’être réels, car l’oiseau s’habitue à tout) qui peut paraître intéressant sur certains sites (plans d’eau par exemple) et un effet psychologique (sans impact sur les populations d’oiseaux) non négligeable. L’encadrement des tirs, obligatoire, constitue plus une contrainte réglementaire bien acceptée, qu’une limite, tant qu’elle n’est pas trop astreignante. Dans le cas contraire, il devient contre-productif. Il n’est pas certain que les tirs soient la meilleure solution de régulation, en tous cas, elle n’est pas la seule. C’est pourquoi, il est urgent de détruire massivement les œufs sur les sites de nidification par le biais d’une campagne européenne de destruction, le cas échéant il est impératif de mettre en place un système d’indemnisation à la fois des coûts directs (poissons consommés et coût global des tirs) et indirects (poissons stressés ou abîmés).

Ainsi, nous déplorons l’arrêt d’activité de nombreux pisciculteurs français, accusés à la désespérance puis à la faillite, en raison de la prolifération des oiseaux piscivores occasionnant une prédation sans précédent sur le cheptel en place dans les étangs. Nous nous sentons désarmés et insuffisamment soutenus face à ce problème majeur. Un exemple parmi tant d’autres : la cessation d’activités d’une des plus importantes piscicultures d’étangs françaises, située dans le Forez, dont M. Jean-François ESCALON était administrateur actif de l’Association Française des Professionnels de la Pisciculture d’Étangs (AFPPE) depuis sa création. La SARL Escalon, créée par le grand-père en 1958, qui gérait quelques 1 500 ha d’étangs et était associée à une centaine de propriétaires d’étangs, a du fermer ses portes. Cette entreprise a produit jusqu’à 450 t de poissons d’étangs en extensif au début des années 1990. Cette production n’a cessé de baisser depuis la prolifération des cormorans, pour atteindre le seuil critique de 212 t de production avec les mêmes surfaces ne parvenant plus à atteindre le seuil de rentabilité économique de l’entreprise, obligeant son dirigeant à cesser son activité.


- Faire le point de la situation (rassembler les faits) et de l’impasse actuelle des conflits entre l’activité de pisciculture et la prédation exercée par la population de grands cormorans.
- Développer des propositions pour mettre en place une gestion européenne des problèmes posés, afin d’apporter des éléments à la commission Européenne, suite à l’adoption fin 2008 du rapport du député KINDERMANN préconisant un plan de gestion européen du grand cormoran.

Cette étude, encadrée par un chercheur INRA/CNRS, Mme Sophie BOBBE, a procédé à un inventaire et recueil des éléments bibliographiques, à une analyse de la bibliographie, à des illustrations par recueil de témoignage terrain sur des sites représentatifs (Dombes / Brenne / Forez / Lorraine… ) – rencontre avec tous les acteurs locaux (DDAF, LPO, pisciculteurs, …) et à des propositions et analyse critique de la situation française par rapport à la situation européenne . Cette étude sera diffusée prochainement et très largement.

Nous sommes dans une impasse depuis plusieurs années. Si la Commission souhaite que la politique environnementale européenne et, par voie de conséquence les politiques nationales, soient acceptées et relayées sur le terrain, les mesures de conservation doivent être suffisamment flexibles pour permettre un équilibre nécessaire entre intérêts sociaux, économiques et environnementaux. Il s’agit de promouvoir un développement durable, dont l’ensemble des composantes doivent être sauvegardées. Les conflits sont inévitablement apparus ; ils auront des conséquences dommageables pour l’avenir avec le risque d’un rejet pur et simple des politiques environnementales européennes. Pour sortir de cette situation conflictuelle, les contributions des pêcheurs et des autres utilisateurs de l’eau (aquaculteurs, gestionnaires de pêcheries en particulier), doivent être intégrées à la réflexion et aux prises de décisions. Il ne peut plus être question de passer en force, d’imposer, sans prendre le risque d’un rejet généralisé des politiques européennes. La conquête d’un territoire n’est plus acceptable, tout doit être discuté, négocié, accepté et intégré avant la prise de décision. Mais pour négocier il faut être plusieurs et, on ne peut que constater et certainement déplorer que cette négociation est aussi un échec : les groupes REDCAFE ou INTERCAFE n’ont pas, jusqu’à présent (c’est-à-dire en 10 ans), pu ou su faire de propositions acceptables par l’ensemble des parties. D’ailleurs, en ce qui concerne la dernière réunion INTERCAFE des 6 et 7 septembre 2008 à Paris, à laquelle nous avons participé activement (présentation power point, …) et bénévolement, nous attendons toujours le compte-rendu … !!!, la situation est véritablement indécrite.

En fonction de ce qui vient d’être développé, la mise en place d’une stratégie européenne basée sur la coordination des actions semble primordiale. Les acteurs concernés ont déjà longtemps patienté, la radicalisation des positions se renforce avec le temps. L’estimation de l’impact des actions entreprises au plan local sur l’état de conservation de l’espèce est une composante de la gestion de l’espèce à intégrer dans la réflexion globale. Accroître les tirs sur les oiseaux, est peut être nécessaire à certains endroits. Mais, en dehors de tout problème de conservation de l’espèce est une composante de la gestion de l’espèce à intégrer dans la réflexion globale. En fonction de ce qui vient d’être développé, la mise en place d’une stratégie européenne basée sur la coordination des actions semble primordiale. Les acteurs concernés ont déjà longtemps patienté, la radicalisation des positions se renforce avec le temps. L’estimation de l’impact des actions entreprises au plan local sur l’état de conservation de l’espèce est une composante de la gestion de l’espèce à intégrer dans la réflexion globale. Accroître les tirs sur les oiseaux, est peut être nécessaire à certains endroits. Mais, en dehors de tout problème de conservation de l’espèce est une composante de la gestion de l’espèce à intégrer dans la réflexion globale. Endroit de toute stratégie globale qui doit être mise en œuvre et qui comprend un certain nombre d’actions coordonnées telles la stérilisation des œufs, la maîtrise des colonies nouvelles, celle des aires de nidification nouvelles, et peut être d’autres encore.

La mise en place d’une politique de gestion du cormoran doit aussi pouvoir s’appuyer sur un bilan global de la prédation sur les espèces piscicoles par les cormorans comprenant :

- les aspects économiques : coût de la prédation sur les productions piscicoles ( estimée à 10 % du tonnage total produit), impact négatif sur le tourisme pêche (un passionné dépense de 1 200 à 1 500 € pour pêcher une semaine dans des sites de qualité), or les recettes autour de ce loisir constituent un retour sur investissement pour les élus,
- le coût environnemental sur des espèces patrimoniales : les poissons méritent tout autant l’attention que les oiseaux et les pêcheurs tout aussi crédibles que les protecteurs des oiseaux. Il faut noter que la perte de biodiversité touche aussi d’autres espèces que les poissons. La biodiversité a aussi une valeur, - les coûts sociaux (impact sur les emplois en aquaculture, dans les activités touristiques, etc.),
- les impacts sur les paysages (abandon des étangs),
- les aspects sociétaux : ressentiement du public par rapport à la régulation, avec des conséquences sur l’information et la communication vis-à-vis du public et des acteurs de l’environnement et le rejet par les populations des politiques européennes.

Ainsi, l’heure n’est plus aux études, mais aux actions concrètes et efficaces … .

Espérant que vous comprendrez notre position et dans l’attente néanmoins d’un compte-rendu de cette rencontre, nous vous remercions de transmettre nos observations aux autres participants à ce séminaire.

Nous vous prions de croire, Monsieur, à l’assurance de nos sentiments les meilleurs.
APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE PRE-MEETING QUESTIONNAIRE

Facilitator’s Summary

1. There were 11 responses, varying in length from 110 to 2,800 words.

2. Three respondents enclosed or drew attention to additional information, e.g. position statements, references to other work, published documents and web-based information.

3. No requests in relation to confidentiality were made in response to the question “I would like the following answers kept confidential by the facilitator.”

4. Facilitator’s observations:
   - Range of responses – Interest and enthusiasm for the project; some scepticism and concern about it.
   - Range of emotions – Some anxiety, concern – even frustration. Also positive, open, hopeful – even pleased.
   - Voice – pleased to have a voice, concerned to have a ‘fair hearing,’ some voices not with us.
   - Progress and focus – people seek a sense of progression and action.
   - Clarity – seeking clarity across a number of areas.
   - Then and now – the issue has a history. This project represents opportunities.
WHAT, IN YOUR VIEW, SHOULD THIS PROJECT AIM TO ACHIEVE (WITHIN ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE)?

COMMUNICATIONS AND PEOPLE FOCUS

- Effective communication
- Constructive, interactive dialogue with stakeholders
- Sharing experiences & data
- Stakeholder opinions and inputs are taken seriously
- Willingness to help defuse conflict
- Recognise that the human dimension not as an obstacle but key to any successes
- A forum to share knowledge scientific and practical issues
- Disseminate best practice & help to find solutions to cormorant-related problems.

CLARITY ON COMPLEX ISSUES

- Clarify how conflict can be attenuated within Bird Directive framework. EU guidance concerning derogations would be useful.
- Communicate complexity of the great cormorant issue in clear language; to stress that there is no single solution to managing damage caused by cormorants.
- Precise, reliable cormorant population data and information - facts / figures disseminated to a wide audience so that some eternal debates (i.e. on cormorant numbers in Europe) are not any more discussed and people can focus on other problems.

CLARITY ON EXPECTATIONS AND PROJECT FOCUS

- Implement project title ‘Sustainable management of cormorants’ as soon as possible
- A significant reduction (in numbers) of cormorants in Europe
- What is the need to spend time and money to design a website on “Cormorants in Europe”
- Web site should address present shortcomings - be up-to-date; provide balanced focus (including editorial board); separate/prioritise fact from opinion; be solution orientated; engaging and utilised (e.g. personal answers)
- An ‘official’ EU Cormorant Platform has been desirable since many years. It is highly important to change the communication atmosphere. It would be a success if stakeholders say “Go to the EU cormorant website. It does not cover every detail, but it is valid, authoritative and trustworthy.”
- Under guidance of a neutral facilitator, it may be fairly easy to get agreement on probably 80% of questions
- EU Birds Directive sets the overall frame of reference
- Delivery of contractual commitments to the EC
- In one quick sentence, it is very important for this project to clearly summarise the cormorant problems identified by previous projects, and find a suitable solution for a pan-European management plan.
- Disseminate information that can be of value to:-
  - People experiencing problems with cormorants
  - Provide an update on cormorant numbers in Europe
  - People who would like to be informed about cormorant numbers
  - People who would like to look for literature on cormorants
WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FROM THE MEETING?

AN IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF ONE ANOTHER

• Let go of pre-conceived ideas & opinions (may not be easy at first)
• That we understand this project represents a unique opportunity to find a commonly agreeable, sustainable, way out from the presently untenable cormorants - fisheries conflictive stalemate
• Better understanding on how our view of each other (including the Commission) are evolving
• I truly hope that with this meeting we will all get the chance to clearly state our views and be heard by other stakeholders
• That we decide on how to communicate
• To take on board the positions of the other stakeholders
• We all agree that it is worth giving the project a chance
• I am happy that the project has started, very interested in a positive result, and will try to act in a way that does not strain the atmosphere of the meeting.

GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF PROJECT

• Clear view of details of the project -- how the goals and expectations of the project could be met
• To discuss the use of the obtained data and ensure openness of information
• Stakeholders get clear view of how they can contribute to the process of adding value to the project
• I have spent much time thinking on the whole issue that I (prefer) to come quickly to concrete discussion of critical points and reserve time to discussion (e.g. of the Toolbox and counting methods)

ESTABLISH CLEAR GOALS

• Discuss and agree clearly described steps and time frames towards a sustainable management of cormorant population in Europe
• At this first meeting, my expectations are modest in terms of project delivery and outputs. However, I do see this meeting as being a critical first step in building trust, establishing relationships and looking to establish a clear path for the next stages of the work
• As this is this first meeting of the SLG, my expectations are to learn of the approach to be taken by the contractor in addressing the sustainable management of cormorants
• I hope that discussion will be possible by e-mail after the meeting
• That we make a plan for what we would like to achieve before the November 2011 meeting
• That we all accept that the project (the Platform) is an organic unit that will develop through time
WHAT OUTCOMES WOULD YOU LIKE FROM THE MEETING?

A WAY OF WORKING TOGETHER

• Harmony, co-operation, sharing of data & experiences
• For the first meeting, to develop working arrangements together towards a common goal: the objectives of the tender were incorporated into the contents of the bid.
• That we go back with a clear idea of everybody’s role, with realistic workload, given everyone’s busy life
• Effective links established between participants that will facilitate open exchange of views and information based on mutual trust and a sense of working towards a common goal (recognising that opinions may vary).
• Every stakeholder has a say regarding the questions and contents put on the Platform’s website and a formal right to place a ‘dissenting opinion’ on the website
• That stakeholders conclude to give the project a chance
• A positive attitude towards the project

A PLAN

• A clear timetable for information and solutions to solve problems in different conflict situations.
• A draft of a ‘road map’ showing how the project will lead to sustainable management.
• Up-to-date information available for public use.
• A practical solution to the cormorant predation problems of European pond farmers, fishermen and other wetland management organisations.
• Clarity of what will be achieved and delivered under the project
• Establish an agreed priority list of topics to be dealt with immediately, with ‘preliminary answers’ put on the website in the next 6 months.

GUIDANCE AND/OR AGREEMENTS

• Consent that the EU Birds Directive will be the overall frame of reference for judging all potential measures for reducing the negative effects of cormorants to fisheries and/or flora and fauna
• The project must demonstrate progress: many issues where consensus should be fairly easy. But some are controversial - discussion is inevitable – so it should be signalled that the project has started the discussion.
• Agreement about rules for cooperation between project members and stakeholders e.g. website discussion, direct e-mails to other stakeholders, e-mails to the consortium, (which then distributes to stakeholder groups), etc.
• Understanding and agreement on how to co-operate in cormorant counting and control of results.

CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY AND OTHER ISSUES

• Clarification of counting results, census 2006
• ‘Impact on fisheries’
• ‘Effect’, ‘damage’ & ‘serious damage’
• ‘Valid’ – e.g. ‘valid argument’, ‘valid information’
• ‘Alpha-error’ and ‘beta-error’
GOING INTO THE MEETING, WHAT KEY OPPORTUNITIES MIGHT THERE BE FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

OPEN-MINDED, POSITIVE APPROACHES

• Use of all our skills as a team to achieve outcomes
• To create an open, constructive, environment for working towards helping achieving the goals of the action.
• Strengthen the link between stakeholders involved
• To discuss facts and interests clearly, open-mindedly, in an open atmosphere.
• Respect facts and opinions.
• To present our problem to a wider audience, with possible decision-making capabilities.
• Meeting and catching up with the other stakeholders.
• To engage participants on a common aim – to improve dissemination of relevant information
• Getting direct contact with other stakeholder representatives with opportunity to discuss matters in a non-controversial atmosphere
• Opportunity to demonstrate respect, practical and scientific expertise and judgement
• To build trust
• Opportunity to listen, to respond face-to-face, to convince (on various matters), to discuss directly the validity of some conclusions
• To create some group spirit – all in the same boat

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

• Develop the concept for pan-European aspect in relation to cormorants.
• Opportunities for learning more about cormorant/fishery conflicts and the stakeholders affected, and for sharing my expertise/knowledge.
• Opportunities for developing new skills
• The satisfaction of working collaboratively to meet shared goals
• An update of latest research/progress/problems would be useful
DO YOU HAVE ANY MAJOR CONCERNS ABOUT THE MEETING? IF SO PLEASE DESCRIBE THESE.

THE PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

- Some may view meeting as a talking shop
- There may be some distrust about the process and its importance
- I do not have major concerns - the meeting is well organised
- Inefficient collaboration with national count coordinators
- The value of the outputs for end users
- How to decide what material (literature, links, documents) to include, what to exclude and to explain why something was not included
- Too much time dedicated to ‘announcements’ by the project consortium, before we come to the discussion of topics critical to stakeholders
- Project administration:- taking care of project tasks and handling of questions from stakeholders, work space and Platform users as well as team members

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THE MEETING

- Feeling that the project is useless and people being unconstructive
- More ‘fish’ than ‘cormorant’ representatives
- Composition of the project steering group and leadership
- Whether the project leaders will act in a balanced and non-partisan way
- We fully underline the statements of Yvette White (on behalf of French fish farmers) and share her concerns
- The (effort involved) and importance to create a positive atmosphere?
- I see this contract as a positive step towards achieving some solutions to the cormorant issue.
- Unhappiness with the past and little hope for the future
- Strong disagreements among team members
- Stakeholders role regarding website content and right to voice dissenting opinion
FOR THE STAKEHOLDERS YOU REPRESENT, WHAT ARE THE TOP 5 TOPICS (RELATED TO CORMORANTS/FISH) THAT NEED DISCUSSION?

• There are different issues that should be discussed in course of the project. The priority issues should be discussed in the first meeting

COUNTING
• Accuracy and relevance of counts
• The coverage of the breeding and wintering population counts
• Possibilities to develop a permanent counting system for cormorant breeding colonies and wintering areas.
• Information on the wintering areas of individuals from a specific breeding area (individual markings).
• Summary of latest research, population status

IMPACT AND MITIGATION
• Monitoring impacts of cormorants on aquaculture and wild fish populations
• INTERCAFE outputs, the INTERCAFE Toolbox
• Best practice for attenuating conflicts in rivers
• Scaring and management methods to prevent damage in inland aquaculture
• Monitoring potential collateral damage to other water bird species during cormorant scaring activities, inside and outside protected areas.
• State of the art in Article 9 derogations and management approaches in the different member states/ success and failures
• Long-term management plan options for the cormorant population in Europe according to fish stock management: target values, reference points, methods to achieve goals
• What mix of methods is best suited to reduce the probability of serious damage to fisheries and fish stocks in natural waters to a bearable level
• Frank discussion of pros and cons of a cormorant population management in breeding colonies, where all stakeholders get the same opportunity to voice arguments
• Cormorant predation on fish pond areas and natural waters
• Damage compensation issues
• Cormorant population control at nesting sites
• Biodiversity issues regarding protected fish species

TECHNICAL AND PROJECT ADMINISTRATION
• How website will operate. Content of the DG ENV website
• What contributions are needed from the SLG?
• Project planning, future dates events, meetings
• Common terminology
• The best way to transfer findings of empirical studies to the Platform website

PLANS AND GOALS
• Possibilities to develop guidelines for national, regional and Europe-wide management plans.
• Limiting the population size and distribution of cormorants to an acceptable level.
• What can the project contribute to improve the discussion climate between fishery and bird protection
ONE OF YOUR ROLES IS TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON THE TRANSFER OF MATERIALS TO THE WEBSITE(S). HOW MIGHT THIS GUIDANCE BE OBTAINED WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION?

- Large panel of specialists from different countries can give their views on the material
- Knowledge of how our members would find this material useful
- Do not fully understand the question. More info needed on this issue
- I think it will be OK!
- I can address this question to our communication staff
- We will try to get a representative picture by asking our members

HOW WILL YOU EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND ENGAGE WITH STAKEHOLDERS YOU ARE REPRESENTING?

- Information gleaned from project will help me keep abreast of developments around Europe and help me to be better placed to engage with stakeholders and policy makers
- To be considered according to the circumstances
- It depends on the content. It would be useful to know what can and can't be said before the end of the contract
- The main forum for information exchange is the annual general meeting (April), where I will give a small report on work carried out at the SLG meeting
- Basically through email
- Report to the European Division offices and interested partners
- Taskforce of partners around the problems of the Bird and Habitat Directive - this would be a good moment to exchange information about cormorants
- Disseminate via mail and paper, discuss within boards, subgroups and general assemblies, decide on positions.
- We have several channels (website, newsletter, internal communications, member networks, internal press)
- Through a special ‘Task Force Cormorants’. There are regular meetings and an established communications system either via website or ad hoc e-mail, both with feedback loops. The cormorant issue is among our top 5 priorities so we will definitely care for an adequate information exchange
ONE OF YOUR ROLES IS TO GUIDE THE CONSORTIUM IN BETTER UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES THAT LAY BEHIND THE CONFLICTS ASSOCIATED WITH CORMORANTS AND THE VARIOUS SPECIALIST & COMMUNITY INTERESTS. HOW MIGHT YOU ACHIEVE THIS? WHAT SUPPORT DO YOU NEED?

DISCUSSION FROM PRIOR INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES

• Explaining how we see bird conservation in Europe as a whole
• Through discussion - use of examples, experiences, published and grey literature, *modus operandi* of Moran Committee, etc.
• As part of the SLG I can hopefully share interest from the many European Countries we represent
• I would use information from the people in related current and previous projects
• There are different levels of issues behind the conflict – from generalised, abstract levels to more ‘banal’ issues (too many cormorants eat too many fish). There are many layers in between – ‘philosophically’ interesting and could be endlessly discussed. But the consortium should not spend too much time on finding new words for well-known phenomena.

NEW APPROACHES, OR ADDRESSING GAPS

• The consortium should present a (very draft) proposal about open questions, how to solve them and how we could achieve a sustainable management according to the title of the project. The liaison group will comment on that and contribute own proposals.
• To save time and redundancies I would ask the consortium to first describe what they think - say where we agree – and specify where we don’t.
• If further necessary, I would work on a new paper which clarifies our position in those specific points where the consortium feels that they need more detail
• I will probably have a more clear view after the meeting about this question.

SUPPORT NEEDED

• The support we need is scientific advice on long-term management plans for populations
• Support needed - communication material. Platform to share knowledge (e.g. the website)
• I would submit some of the presentations and papers which we have delivered on this subject.
• Support needed - that the chairman/facilitator creates an atmosphere where all group members are really listening and that there is enough time for thorough exchange of views.
• Setting limits and avoid promising something that I/we may not be able to do although it would be nice to do it.
APPENDIX D

CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAM OF PROJECT-RELATED WEBSITES

The flow chart below represents an initial draft for the structure of the project websites, as drawn on a whiteboard to provide a starting point for discussions. It might evolve over time.

Through discussions the group concluded that the Platform content should be kept concise and clear, focussing on issues of main relevance for problem solving, and conflict management, reduction and mitigation. The Platform should also avoid too many links to other websites, which could cause distraction and confusion. Caution should also be applied with reference to and uploading of papers. Irrespective of whether these are peer reviewed or ‘grey literature’, papers must be checked for validity, plausibility and potential logical contradictions. Where necessary and possible, explicit caveats should be mentioned.
The facilitator used different sized cards to develop a draft of the diagram above to discuss examples of the various impacts affecting different wild fish stocks and fisheries. Three main points were made:

1. Different fish stocks and fisheries have different combinations of issues causing negative impacts on their status.
2. Some impacts are a matter of opinion, while others are strong, scientifically verifiable causal links. Often, though, it is not possible to be so certain (e.g. population data and trends can be relatively straightforward to obtain in small water bodies or river stretches, but hard in other places and for migrating birds). Under these circumstances, we may have to work with ‘plausible links’. While opinions and rumours may not be the best form of data (cannot be scientifically verified) people often make policy based on opinion. Policing in Europe, for example, is often organised on the basis of people’s fear of crime (and opinions) rather than scientifically verifiable crime statistics that often are at odds with local opinion.
3. The size of the squares (‘invasive species,’ ‘cormorants,’ ‘habitat destruction’, etc.) is the same in this figure, but in reality the size of the impact varies. One cormorant on a river with highly prized rare fish species can be very destructive indeed, while 20 cormorants on a large open water body may have small effect on the wild fish. Impacts (from cormorants and other agents) vary with context as well as the frequency, strength or density of the ‘agent’ causing the impact.
APPENDIX F

CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAM OF IMPORTANCE OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES, GOALS AND RELATIONSHIPS

The facilitator developed a sketch of ‘conflict management styles’ during the meeting and used this diagram to consider ways in which people may approach a conflict. This will be influenced by a number of things. Groups or people each have their own interests or goals. But how they respond to situations depends also on how important they feel it is to maintain a relationship with the other person or group. These things will also be influenced by the degree of power people feel they have, their preferred style, their normal approach to conflict, and their degree of flexibility in working with different approaches.

No single style is the ‘right’ one. Each style depends on circumstances and on how comfortable people feel with adopting a given style given particular relationships, goals and context. If neither the goal nor the relationship(s) are important, then withdrawal might make sense. But withdrawing completely can make it impossible to achieve lasting solutions for all parties.

Accommodation, if always used, can lead to discontent and the risk of a ‘flare up’ (e.g. “Why is it always me who gives in?”)

Forcing needs to be carefully chosen because relationships and power balances often are more important than we perceive them to be. In some situations, ‘forcers’ may be met with costly and unexpected force in return, rather than the withdrawal or accommodation they expected.

Compromise can help build rapport but there often are situations where a compromise leaves both sides unhappy (“Could I have got more out of this negotiation – did I give them too much?”).

Co-operation and collaboration (consensual negotiations) emphasises creativity and positive, mutually satisfying outcomes and may hold the greatest promise in many natural resource conflicts. However, this style requires careful handling and skilful facilitation in some circumstances.